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The bicycle may prove one of the greatest benefactors of the human race. It may, however, work great harm, and in four ways accomplish it. First, by injudicious long-distance riding. Ambitious riders who attempt to accomplish "centuries" and "double centuries" may do so at the expense of their entire future well-being. Peculiarly favorable physical conditions may make it safe for a person to ride four or even five hours a day, but as a rule an hour or two is amply sufficient to obtain good results. Second, by riding on a badly constructed saddle, which distributes the weight of the body over parts which were not intended to withstand pressure. Third, riders suffering from diseases affecting the pelvic organs are apt to unduly congest these. In all these diseases the return circulation is impeded, *i. e.*, the blood vessels leading from the parts toward the heart are more or less compressed by the swelling or enlargement which naturally accompanies the disease. Of course, the exercise increases the blood supply to the parts, and this cannot be returned to the heart in proportion to the increase. The swelling is naturally enlarged and the inflammatory condition aggravated. Fourth, by the "scorcher posture," by which the chest is contracted, the lungs squeezed, so to speak, into a space too small to hold them. The air cannot properly dilate them and consumptive tendencies are greatly favored. The spine is formed by a number of bony rings bound together by ligamentous and muscular bands. Between each of these rings is a disc made of elastic cartilage resembling India rubber in consistency. These make the spine flexible in all directions. If the spine bends toward the front, the discs are compressed in front and expand behind. If the spine bends backward, the discs contract and expand in the opposite direction. Now, if we remain in a bent-over position and the discs are kept for a period of time compressed, they lose their elasticity and remain compressed on one side and expanded on the other. After a time the cartilage becomes hardened as bone and holds the person bent over with a curvature of the spine.

The modern bed is also utterly destructive to the spine. It is soft, piled at one end with pillows, and it curves the spine exactly as is curved that of the scorcher. A flat bed and a low pillow are conducive to healthful rest and a straight, handsome frame.

If we would be happy, handsome, and healthy, we should eat carefully, avoid exertion after meals, dress loosely and comfortably, exercise moderately, and sleep not in badly constructed beds.

CYRUS EDSON.

SHALL WE TAX THE HUMAN LEG ?

THE bicycle tax was conceived in the brain of the man whose sole idea of property was that it was "something to tax." The fierce fight that is waged against it in Paris, Chicago, St. Louis and other great cities where it has been levied grows out of the instinctive, intuitive feeling among wheelmen that the tax is unjust. They have raised many objections to it, which have varied with localities. In some places it has been fought on the ground that as other vehicles were not taxed it was class legislation. In others, as at Paris, it has been alleged that the wheel having become an object of use by workmen who go to their place of employment on it, the levy was a discrimination against the poor. But this attempt to array one class against another has been as futile as the others. In Chicago, the recent bicycle tax ordinance evolved

long and learned arguments to the effect that the assessment meant double taxation. So everywhere the objections to this new tax have differed in accordance with the community affected. But there is one objection to the tax that is fundamental, and applies to it irrespectively of locality. The bicycle tax when stripped of the sophistries which have accompanied its elevation into municipal ordinance is simply a tax on leg power, and in that respect restricts the citizen in the exercise of his physical forces. The mere consideration of what the bicycle does for man will clearly demonstrate the unconstitutionality of the tax. The bicycle is a means by which man puts to the best use the driving power of his legs. It occupies nearly the same relation as the shoe. Foot covering enables a man to walk better, the bicycle goes a little further and adds the feature of speed. If it is right to tax the bicycle it is equally right to tax the shoe. Or carry the comparison further. The crutch of the cripple enables him to utilize his powers of locomotion more than if he did not use it. It increases the speed of the legless man as much in proportion as the bicycle adds to the speed of the man with complete limbs. Is the crutch to be taxed? If not why the bicycle? In Bermuda I once saw a paralytic who could move about only by propelling himself in a perambulator. When they taxed his perambulator at the Custom House, he said with a pathos entirely lost on the officials, "Don't you know you are taxing my legs."

The argument that the bicycle is a vehicle, and is, therefore, a proper subject for taxation is completely nullified by recent legal decisions. In Great Britain within the past year judges have ruled that bicycles are not vehicles, and in the United States the Courts have upheld the acts compelling railroads to carry bicycles as baggage, in face of the railroads' contention that wheels were vehicles. If bicycles are baggage they are certainly not vehicles. They cannot change their character by being lifted into a car. The suddenness with which the right to have their wheels carried free was accorded to wheelmen by legislatures was a recognition of the fact that the bicycle is part of a man's personal equipment as much as his shoes or his spectacles. The mind should need no special enlightenment to perceive that nothing can be logically classed as a vehicle that depends for its power on man's own physical forces. In wagons, automobiles and locomotives the power is all outside of man's muscles. This distinction is made perfectly clear when we consider the bicycle skate now coming into use on the roads. No one would seriously argue that it should be taxed, for the connection between the leg muscles and the skate is so close as to be apparent at a glance. Even though the bicycle skater should be banished to the roadway from the sidewalk, there would be no reason for taxing him. Some bicyclists seem to think that the payment of a tax entitles them to the use of the road, and it is this belief that is largely responsible for the laws taxing them. They forget that their right to use the road rests on no payment of a tax. It rests on their desire to go somewhere. As well say that the only way a man acquires the right to use a sidewalk is by the payment of a tax on shoes, or in the case of a cripple by paying to use his crutches, for it must not be forgotten that both shoes and crutches injure a roadway more than a rubber tire. Nor can a bicycle tax be justified on the ground that it is to build cycle paths. The same argument would call for a tax on shoes to provide sidewalks.

WM. EVERETT HICKS.